

# 311 STUDENT DISCIPLINE

## Belief

MESC has set out expectations for student conduct and has recognized the collaborative relationship between parents, students and the school in establishing an optimum learning environment in Administrative Procedure 307 – Student Conduct.

## Guidelines

1. Schools shall provide good discipline in order to:
  - 1.1. Develop students' skills and attitudes that will assist them in conducting themselves according to appropriate standards of respectful, responsible behaviour;
  - 1.2. Provide school and classroom conditions which will contribute to effective leading, teaching and learning, and to protect the health and safety needs of students and staff; and
  - 1.3. Contribute to a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging among all members of the school community.
2. Zero Tolerance
  - 2.1. Zero tolerance shall mean that all student misbehaviours and disciplinary issues are challenged, managed, and dealt with. There is a "zero tolerance" for ignoring or avoiding student misbehaviour or disciplinary issues.
  - 2.2. All inappropriate behaviours are dealt with appropriately and in a timely manner, based on the merits of each individual case, with provision for varying consequences depending on the student's age, maturity, individual circumstance, nature of the problem, and the people involved.
  - 2.3. Common sense, discretion, and prudent professional judgment must be exercised in determining the appropriate consequence for each situation.
  - 2.4. Foresight, vigilance, and proactive early interventions are employed in order to limit or preclude the advent or escalation of disciplinary issues.

## Procedures

3. General Discipline
  - 3.1. School discipline shall involve making rules of conduct known to all students, the initiation of learning experiences, giving recognition to students for proper conduct and behaviour, and initiating disciplinary measures when required.
  - 3.2. Expectations for student conduct and possible disciplinary actions shall be communicated to students and parents.

- 3.3. It is expected that conferences between teachers, students, principals and parents/guardians, be employed as a means of bringing about acceptable behaviour,
- 3.4. The hallmark of the exercise of disciplinary authority shall be fairness in light of the rules of natural justice.
- 3.5. The Associate Superintendent: Learning and Student Services is responsible for administration of this administrative procedure at the Authority level.
- 3.6. The Director of Counselling and Student Wellness will be the primary contact for assistance with discipline cases at the school level.
- 3.7. It is the responsibility of the Principal and teachers to maintain good order and discipline in the school for the purpose of:
  - 3.7.1. Developing in each student the capacity for respectful, responsible behaviour;
  - 3.7.2. Providing classroom conditions contributing to effective learning; and
  - 3.7.3. Protecting the health and safety needs of students and staff.
- 3.8. It is the primary responsibility of the teacher/Instructor to ensure an appropriate level of discipline in the classroom, while the Principal is required to maintain order and discipline within the school.
- 3.9. It is expected that the Principal and staff will develop and implement clearly understandable and reasonable expectations for student conduct and that these expectations will be clearly explained to students.
- 3.10. It is intended that all staff work cooperatively to attain an effective learning environment for all students.
- 3.11. Normally, student behaviours occurring off-campus and outside of school sponsored/approved activities are not subject to disciplinary intervention by staff members. Staff members observing such events are deemed as normal citizens with the same rights and responsibilities to advise appropriate authorities or respond in some other acceptable and prudent manner. However, the Principal may impose disciplinary measures relative to these behaviours provided that both of the following criteria are in place:
  - 3.11.1. The student's conduct is injurious to the physical or mental well-being of others in the school; and
  - 3.11.2. The conduct that occurs off-campus must be conduct which, if it occurred at school, would render the student liable to discipline.
- 3.12. In order to maintain an appropriate level of discipline in a school it may, at times, be necessary to apply negative consequences. The following forms of negative consequences are permissible:
  - 3.12.1. Temporary removal from the classroom;
  - 3.12.2. Assignment to an alternate activity;
  - 3.12.3. Withdrawal of classroom, school or extracurricular privileges;
  - 3.12.4. In school suspensions;
  - 3.12.5. Suspensions from class or school for durations of five (5) or less school days, as approved by the Principal or designate;
  - 3.12.6. Placing student on home study
  - 3.12.7. Expulsion from school.
- 3.13. Non permissible forms of discipline are:
  - 3.13.1. Physical aggression by school staff upon a student;
  - 3.13.2. Punishment of innocent persons, mass detentions and mass punishments aimed at unspecified individuals or groups.
  - 3.13.3. Verbal attacks such as sarcasm, racial or personal references; and

- 3.13.4. Unreasonable actions that would subject a student to undue ridicule from classmates.

#### 4. Suspension

- 4.1. Suspension refers to a temporary denial of a student's right to an educational service. The Principal or designate (vice-principal, acting principal) may suspend a student for five or less school days.
- 4.2. The suspension of a student is a serious punitive measure to be invoked when other measures have proven to be ineffective or when the seriousness of the offence warrants such action.
- 4.3. Reasons for suspension shall be at the discretion of school personnel who shall consider the circumstances under which the student commits the offence. The following may be considered as reasons for suspensions but shall not be considered either complete or so prescriptive as to require that suspension follow when a student commits the offence:
  - 4.3.1. Open opposition to the authority of the teacher, Principal, school staff or MESCS;
  - 4.3.2. Willful disobedience over a prolonged period or in a single instance where the disobedience endangers students, teachers, building, or the general climate of orderly behaviour;
  - 4.3.3. Habitual neglect to do assigned work within the students' competence;
  - 4.3.4. Profane or indecent language or gestures in the presence of other students or staff;
  - 4.3.5. Threats of physical violence or an act of violence against another Person;
  - 4.3.6. Any act of indecency in a school building or on school grounds;
  - 4.3.7. Failure to observe and obey any reasonable rule, regulation or procedure established for maintaining a climate of behaviour conducive to learning;
  - 4.3.8. Willful or malicious damage to school property;
  - 4.3.9. Use or possession of drugs or alcohol;
  - 4.3.10. Chronic acts judged to seriously diminish the rights or privileges of staff and students in their participation in the school process;
  - 4.3.11. Flagrant acts of any student deemed to be seriously detrimental to the education or welfare of other students and/or staff of the school;
  - 4.3.12. The student's conduct is injurious to the physical or mental well-being of others in the school.
- 4.4. The student and parent must be informed of the terms of the suspension and specifically why the action was taken.
- 4.5. A teacher may only suspend a student from one class period. The dismissal of a student from a portion of a class period may be considered a "time out" and thus is separate from these procedures.
- 4.6. A Principal or designate may suspend a student from:
  - 4.6.1. One or more class periods,
  - 4.6.2. One or more courses or school programs;
  - 4.6.3. School;
  - 4.6.4. Riding on a school bus, or
  - 4.6.5. Participating in a school activity sponsored or approved by the Board.
- 4.7. A Principal or designate may reinstate a student suspended by him/herself or by a teacher.
- 4.8. When a teacher is considering a suspension, the following will apply:

- 4.8.1. Students shall be given a fair hearing and opportunity to explain his/her actions,
  - 4.8.2. The teacher shall, if possible, confer with the Principal prior to making a decision,
  - 4.8.3. The teacher shall direct the student to the Principal to remain under supervision of the school until the student's usual dismissal time or arrival of the parent,
  - 4.8.4. The teacher shall report all of the circumstances to the Principal in Writing.
- 4.9. In arriving at a decision to suspend, the Principal or designate shall:
- 4.9.1. Review the circumstances with any teacher, support staff, or bus driver who is involved in the situation, and may consult with the Director of Counselling and Student Wellness Services and the Transportation Coordinator;
  - 4.9.2. Conduct such other investigations as deemed necessary;
  - 4.9.3. Give the student a fair hearing and an opportunity to explain his/her actions; and
  - 4.9.4. Have previously informed the parent/guardian of the potential for suspension, if the nature of the student's discipline breach was ongoing or foreseeable.
- 4.10. In the case of a suspension by a teacher, the Principal or designate shall:
- 4.10.1. Confirm the suspension or;
  - 4.10.2. Modify or lift the suspension and issue a warning or reprimand or;
  - 4.10.3. Recommend expulsion.
- 4.11. After making a decision to suspend, the Principal or designate shall:
- 4.11.1. Advise in writing, the student, parent/guardian, and the staff involved (where feasible it is encouraged that the appropriate parties be advised as soon as possible, by telephone or in person);
  - 4.11.2. Advise the student and parent/guardian that if they have concerns with the suspension, they may arrange a meeting with the Principal or designate to discuss those concerns;
  - 4.11.3. Forward a copy of the letter confirming the suspension to the Superintendent and Associate Superintendent Learning and Student Services.
- 4.12. When a Principal suspends a student from riding on a school bus:
- 4.12.1. The procedures as indicated in 4.9 and 4.11 above shall be followed,
  - 4.12.2. It shall be deemed advisable to include the Transportation Coordinator, and bus driver in the meeting with the parent and the student,
  - 4.12.3. Copies of all reports shall also be submitted to the bus driver and the Transportation Coordinator,
  - 4.12.4. The parent is responsible to provide transportation until the student is reinstated.
  - 4.12.5. The first day of suspension from riding on a school bus takes effect after the student has been returned to the normal home drop-off point, unless other arrangements are made with the parent by the Principal.
- 4.13. A student 16 years of age or older, or the parents/guardians, may appeal to the Superintendent or Designate who may reinstate the student or confirm the suspension.

## 5. Expulsions

- 5.1. Expulsion refers to the removal of a student from his/her current class or school for a period of more than 10 school days.
- 5.2. MESc believes that the expulsion of a student is the most serious punitive measure and shall be invoked only with the utmost consideration of the rules of natural justice and right of hearing before the Board or committee thereof.
- 5.3. Recommendations for expulsion by school officials may only be heard and decided by the Board or a committee of the Board. This committee shall include the Superintendent.
- 5.4. A student may be suspended from school during the time in which the recommendation for expulsion is being considered.
- 5.5. An expelled student must be offered another educational program by the Commission.
- 5.6. Principals/designates shall ensure the following has been considered prior to submitting a recommendation for an expulsion:
  - 5.6.1. Recommendations of teachers and counsellors
  - 5.6.2. Consultation with the Associate Superintendent: Learning and Student Services
  - 5.6.3. Evidence obtained through investigation
- 5.7. A recommendation for expulsion by a Principal to the Superintendent shall accompany a report in writing of the circumstances of the suspension.
- 5.8. Principals/designates shall, in writing, inform the student and parents of any recommendation submitted for expulsion.
- 5.9. The following additional documentation shall be made available as required by local circumstances:
  - 5.9.1. Reports from all teachers concerned with the student describing academic achievement, behaviour, and relationship with peers;
  - 5.9.2. Reports from counsellors or other educational personnel;
  - 5.9.3. Reports of remedial action taken by the Principal and teachers; and
  - 5.9.4. The student's cumulative record.
- 5.10. When a recommendation for expulsion occurs it is referred to the Board